



India Development Coalition of America (IDCA)

12th International Conference

On

**Exploring Innovative Strategies for Poverty Eradication
and Climate Change Mitigation in India**

January 11-12, 2016



SUMMARY REPORT

The IDCA 12th International Conference on 'Exploring Innovative Strategies for Poverty Eradication and Climate Change Mitigation in India' held at Sehgal Foundation on Jan 11-12, 2016 saw practitioners from civil society come together to share their work and approaches for poverty alleviation. Dr. S Y Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, gave a rousing Chief Guest address, and the speakers shared their NGO implementation efforts and, in one case, climate change research.

DAY ONE

Inaugural Session (Chair: Ms. Pooja O. Murada, Director, Communications, Sehgal Foundation)



The conference opened with inaugural address from Dr. Mohan Jain, Founder President, IDCA. He talked about IDCA's vision, mission, activities, and accomplishments in recent past and how we can work together to help eradicate poverty and mitigate climate change in India.

Ms. Jane Schukoske, Chief Executive Officer, S M Sehgal Foundation, shared the work and impact of Sehgal Foundation, a public, charitable trust registered in India since 1999. Sehgal Foundation is headquartered in Gurgaon, works in Haryana, Rajasthan and Bihar. The foundation team works together

with rural communities to create sustainable programs for managing water resources, increasing agricultural productivity, and strengthening good rural governance.

Dr. S Y Quraishi, chief guest for the conference, presented about the great elections our country has yet we have a flawed democracy. He stressed the importance of governance at all levels. From his IAS experience, he shared about the big social problems that our nation is ravaged with and that awareness is the only solution!



Plenary 1: Water and Sanitation (Chair: Mr. Salahuddin Saiphy, Program Leader, Water Management, Sehgal Foundation)

Ms. Jaya Indiresan, Advisor, CAP Foundation, shared the challenges and the lessons learnt in several water and sanitation projects in rural areas in India. She described and analysed four case studies relating to tube wells and drinking water, women's leadership in sanitation, wealth from waste, and positive vs. negative incentives. Talking about the good practices and challenges for Swachh Bharat, she said Swachh Bharat requires tremendous efforts, to bring about the desired change.



Mr. Lalit Kumar, Sr. VP, Sulabh International, presented the need for clean India and Sulabh's efforts to promote two pit toilets and other initiatives including human excreta based biogas plant, Sulabh effluent treatment technology, and maintenance of public toilets on 'Pay & Use' basis. He shared the expanse of their work pan India.

Next speaker, Dr. Pramila Sanjaya, Advisor, SIDART, spoke about the community mobilization for their women empowerment work, which trains women to actively participate in local governance. They provide vocational training to women so that they gain confidence and speak up.



Plenary 2: Climate Change Mitigation/Adaptation and Livelihoods (Chair: Mr. Pawan Kumar, Program Leader, Agriculture Development, Sehgal Foundation)

Mr. Arvind Kumar from CORD presented about how their organisation empowers women through community based institutions in agriculture to increase their self-confidence and decision making capacity. This creates sustainable livelihood opportunities for women.



Mr. Saurabh Sood, Asst. Program Leader, Adaptive Technologies, Sehgal Foundation, presented a research study titled Living with Climate Change: Mapping Experience and Adaptation in Semi-Arid Regions in India.



The collaborative study was undertaken to understand the community perceptions attached to the environmental changes occurring in last 30 years, examine the adaptation strategies undertaken by community in response to environmental changes, and analyze the role of perceptions on adaptations.

Ms. Nilanjana Das, Founder and Director, Action Centre for Transformation, shared the work of her organization to train women in rural clusters across few districts in Haryana, who upcycle products and earn a living out of them. The initiative reduces carbon footprint as waste materials are used to create new and improved products of greater utility and protect environment.



Mr. Pramod Deshmukh, Chairman, Sanskriti Samvardhan Mandal, presented the sustainable rural development work of his organization in watershed and agriculture and how community participation has helped in sustenance of the interventions in Nagdarwadi village in Rural Maharashtra.

Mr. Prasant Mohanty, Project Leader, Agriculture Development, Sehgal Foundation, spoke on 'Accelerating agricultural livelihoods for the burdened Indian farmer': A Shared Value Approach to on-farm development that brings all the stakeholders—community, corporate and government together to help farmers increase agricultural productivity and income.



Day one concluded with how everyone can work together and further development work in areas that need help. The participants endorsed IDCA's 'Adopt a Village' and shared that they all can help garner support for this campaign.



DAY TWO

Plenary 3: Healthcare (Chair: Dr. Bornali Datta, MD, Medanta Hospital, Gurgaon)

Dr. Manu Vora, Founder and President, Blind Foundation for India, USA, shared about the genesis and journey of Blind Foundation for India (BFI). BFI works to provide low-cost solutions to the massive problem of blindness with over 15 million blind people in India accounting to 1/3rd of the world's blind population.



Ms. Shruti Kapoor, Asst. Program Leader, Strengthening Village Level Institutions, Sehgal Foundation, presented about the 'Life Skills Education' program in Mewat district, Haryana, particularly on the capacity building of adolescent girls on healthcare under this program and of village institutions on health.

Dr. Prasanna Patil, Director-Projects, Dr. Hedgewar Hospital, Aurangabad, shared rich experiences at Savitribai Phule Mahila Ekatma Samaj Mandal, the social development projects wing of Dr. Hedgewar Hospital, which is active in Healthcare, Education and Natural Resources Management in Marathwada region of Maharashtra through its 37 projects in 102 villages and 40 slum localities.



Dr. Awadh Dubey, Director, R.K. Devi Eye Centre, Kanpur, and Kriti Agnihotri, Researcher, Australia, stressed on the 'giving' concept of how an individual can help fellow citizens in various facts of life as government efforts are not sufficient. His efforts have helped many patients have proper sight after cataract cure.

Kriti on the other hand, a young scholar from Sydney, shared her vision to serve voluntarily to provide sight for poor and marginalised in Australia and how like-minded students can get together to contribute to the country of their origin.

Plenary 4: Education (Chair: Anjali Makhija, Group Leader, Strengthening Village Level Institutions, Sehgal Foundation)

Dr. Manu Vora, Founder and President, Blind Foundation for India, USA, shared about the Gift of Knowledge Transfer Leveraging Technology - Free *Gian Daan* initiative. The aim is to create an ecosystem for world-class quality workforce in India through Leadership Excellence Series (LES). Since December 2013, this effort is underway to share quality management knowledge and soft skills to professionals/students/faculty/staff at various educational institutions in India.



Mr. Vijendra Agarwal, Founder and CEO, Vidya Gyan, Minnesota, USA and Saharanpur, UP, presented his experience of Sukanya Scholarships: Building a Path to Empower and Secure the Future. His NGO utilizes the government-regulated Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) to offer Sukanya Scholarships of Rs. 500 each, to be equally matched by parents, to initiate the SSY savings accounts requiring a minimum of Rs. 1000.



Ms. Arti Manchanda Grover, Program Leader, Communications, Sehgal Foundation, spoke about her experiences in community radio, one of the oldest and affordable technology, which holds huge potential to bring positive change for people with restricted mobility, little access to resources and education, and low decision-making power. The presentation discussed ideas and approaches for promoting education through community radio, the challenges faced and way forward.

Closing remarks and the way forward



Jane Schukoske, CEO- Sehgal Foundation in the end summed up the two days of discourse and encouraged the participants to learn and collaborate with each other for a better impact in their respective development work area. She also mentioned about the 'Adopt a village' campaign started by IDCA, and invited people to join IDCA in this endeavour and take the message forward to the like minded people and organisations. The following recommendations came up during her interaction with the participants.

Key Recommendations

1. Engaging students and academic institutions: For the next conference, there needs to be a concerted effort by each speaker to involve at least 3-5 youth in the conference - perhaps those involved in their NGO or youth interested in their work.
2. Establishing a Youth Involvement Committee: IDCA should consider constituting a committee to brainstorm and act on ideas to involve the next generations of leaders in the IDCA members' excellent work.



THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Useful Links:

Conference pictures: <https://goo.gl/photos/L1CTvq2X5ndTCuMTA>

Speaker Presentations: <https://goo.gl/cys1R0>